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SENATE BILL 2843
By Dixon

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4, Chapter 3, Part 2 and Title 43, and to enact the "Biobased Products: Developing a Strategic Agricultural Infrastructure and Rural Economic Opportunities Act of 2000".

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Biobased Products: Developing a Strategic Agricultural Infrastructure and Rural Economic Opportunities Act of 2000".

SECTION 2. The general assembly finds that the development of biobased products, agricultural biomass, bast fiber crops, and industrial utilization are in the best interest of agriculture and the economy of Tennessee. There is hereby created a competitive grants program administered by the department of agriculture to solicit projects that develop data concerning the benefits of biobased products, agricultural biomass, bast fiber crops, and industrial utilization to rural economies in Tennessee.

SECTION 3. The purpose of this competitive grants program is to develop a variety of projects to test the effects of biobased products, disseminate data concerning biobased products and new industries for agriculture, and to participate in the formation of new biobased industries in Tennessee.

SECTION 4. To effectuate the purposes of this act, the department of agriculture shall develop application procedures and offer competitive grants at the discretion, and under the supervision, of the commissioner of agriculture.

SECTION 5. Funds appropriated for this competitive grant program shall be utilized for projects to include, but not be limited to, the development of dissemination tools such as websites, CD-ROMs, conferences or other information resources; the development of agricultural data and impact studies; development of hands-on demonstration and field trips; and other similar projects. Grants shall be available to private businesses, research institutions, universities and non-profit organizations operating with their base of operations in Tennessee. Grants shall be available through a competitive selection process.

SECTION 6. The competitive grant program shall be structured in such a way so as not to require an expenditure in any fiscal year in which this program is in operation in excess of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000).

SECTION 7. No later than July 1, 2001, and at two-year intervals thereafter, the department of agriculture shall report to the general assembly relative to the progress of the competitive grant program.

SECTION 8. The commissioner of agriculture is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations to effectuate the purposes of this act. All such rules and regulations shall be promulgated in accordance with the provisions of Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4, Chapter 5.

SECTION 9. The competitive grants program created by this act shall cease to exist on July 1, 2005.

SECTION 10. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.